PC

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NO. 2

Somerset Holmes

JONES ANDERSON
CAMPBELL

Somerset Holmes

Color: CHIODO

Letters: CODY

"STRANGERS ON A TRAIN"

A young, pretty woman walks down a moonlit country road. Suddenly, headlights appear behind her, gaining on her rapidly, too rapidly, and seconds later she lies in the grass by the roadside, a crumpled doll.

Consciousness returns slowly, painfully. She sits up, her head a throbbing, empty mass. What happened? She can't remember. She starts walking down the road.

Minutes later, she comes to a dark house. Dr. Jacob Hinkle, the sign says. She knocks frantically, and an elderly man lets her in, guiding her to the examining room while he goes to make coffee. He hands her an application for treatment. Trying to fill it out, the woman realizes that she hasn't the slightest clue to her own identity! She waits for the doctor. He doesn't return. Cautiously, she ventures out of the examining room looking for Dr. Hinkle. She finds him, sitting in front of a blank TV screen—a knife in his back!

Quickly, she grabs up her clothing and phones the police. But before she can finish her call, she sees heavy work boots protruding from beneath the drapes near the body. Seconds later she is out of the window and running through the woods.

In the distance she sees the lights of a small town. There she finds a local tavern and borrows a dime to make another phone call to the police. She goes into the women's restroom. Suddenly the door creaks open, and she hides in a toilet stall. A pair of heavy work boots halts before her booth. Silence. The footsteps subside, and the woman, feeling safe, steps out of the booth.

A hand clamps down over her mouth, and she feels a steel blade at her throat. "Okay, baby," says a hoarse voice. "You know what I want . . ."

She sidesteps the assailant, smashing his head into the restroom mirror, and ends up knocking the man unconscious with the toilet seat. Behind her, the customers break into the restroom, led by a local policeman—wearing a pair of heavy work boots. The policeman reaches for his sidearm, ordering her to stop. She takes a running start and leaps through a torn screen window into a garbage-strewn alleyway below, and starts once more to run.

In the alleyway, a man starts up his motorcycle and takes off in pursuit. The woman runs desperately into the woods. She falls over a ledge, catching on the branches of a tree. The cyclist is not so lucky. He jumps the ledge and crashes below, his cycle bursting into flame.

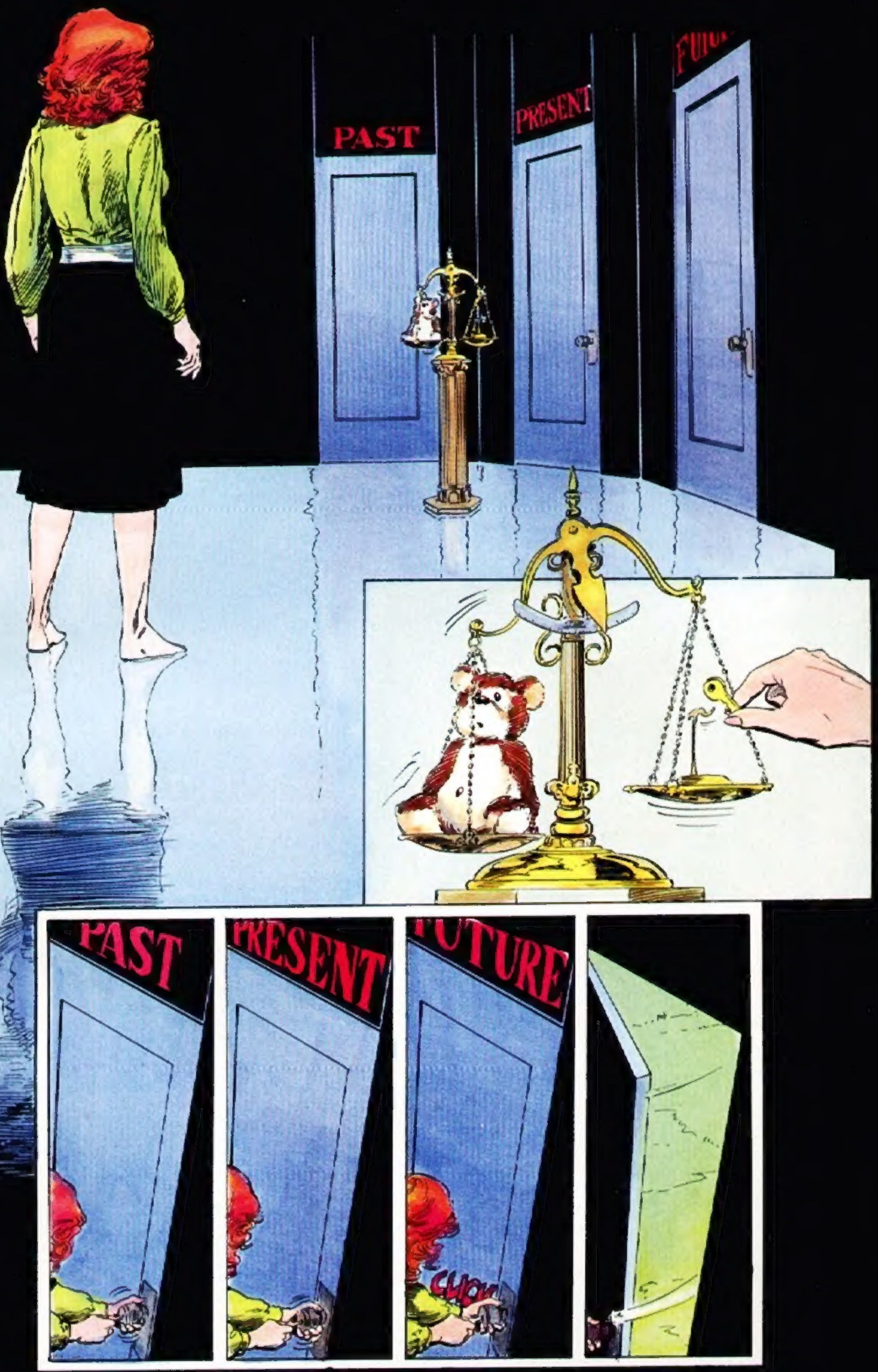
The woman climbs back onto the ledge to safety. Something is stuck in the lining of her belt: a **key**. She comes to the roadside, and soon an old farm truck stops beside her. "Ride, Miss?" asks the driver. She steps into the truck. "Thank you . . ."

Back at Dr. Hinkle's, a mysterious man surveys the body of Dr. Hinkle. He searches through a desk drawer, holding up an empty keychain . . .

The woman sits in the front seat of the truck beside the farmer, staring absently at the key. "—name's Josh Clinton. Miss? You got a handle?"

She stares out the window. They pass a billboard that says, "SUMMERSET HOMES—BETTER LIVING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE."

". . . Somerset's my name . . . Somerset Holmes . . ."


PAST
PRESENT
FUTURE
PAST
PRESENT
FUTURE

NOOO

WE'LL BE AT MY PLACE IN ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES. YOU CAN GET A GOOD REST THERE!

IT'S AWFULLY NICE OF YOU TO GIVE ME A LIFT LIKE THIS, MR. CLINTON.

THINK NUTHIN' OF IT--I'VE MISSED PLENTY OF BUSSES IN MY TIME.

--THEN MATTIE DIED LAST YEAR AND I'VE HAD TO WORK ALL FORTY ACRES MYSELF. THE GIRLS ARE ALL MARRIED NOW, 'CEPT EMMY LOU, SHE WORKS AT A PIZZA PLACE IN FAIRVALE AND--

LORD, I'M TALKIN' TOO MUCH, AIN'T I?

NOT AT ALL...

WELL, IT AIN'T MUCH, BUT IT'S HOME. PHONE'S OVER THERE, MISS--??

HOLMES. SOMERSET HOLMES.

HOLMES, THAT'S IT!

... BUT WHO DO I CALL?... I DON'T EVEN KNOW MY *OWN* NAME, MUCH LESS ANYONE ELSE'S...

CALL GET THROUGH?

UH, NO... IT'S BUSY...

WELL, YOU CAN TRY AGAIN LATER. MAKE YOURSELF TO HOME IN THE PARLOR. I'VE GOT SOME COFFEE GOING!

THAT SOUNDS GREAT, THANKS!

AH, THERE SHE IS! FEEL BETTER?

MUCH! WHAT TIME IS IT?

EIGHT-THIRTY... YOU SLEPT ALL DAY...

OH, LORD! I'M SO SORRY MR. CLINTON--

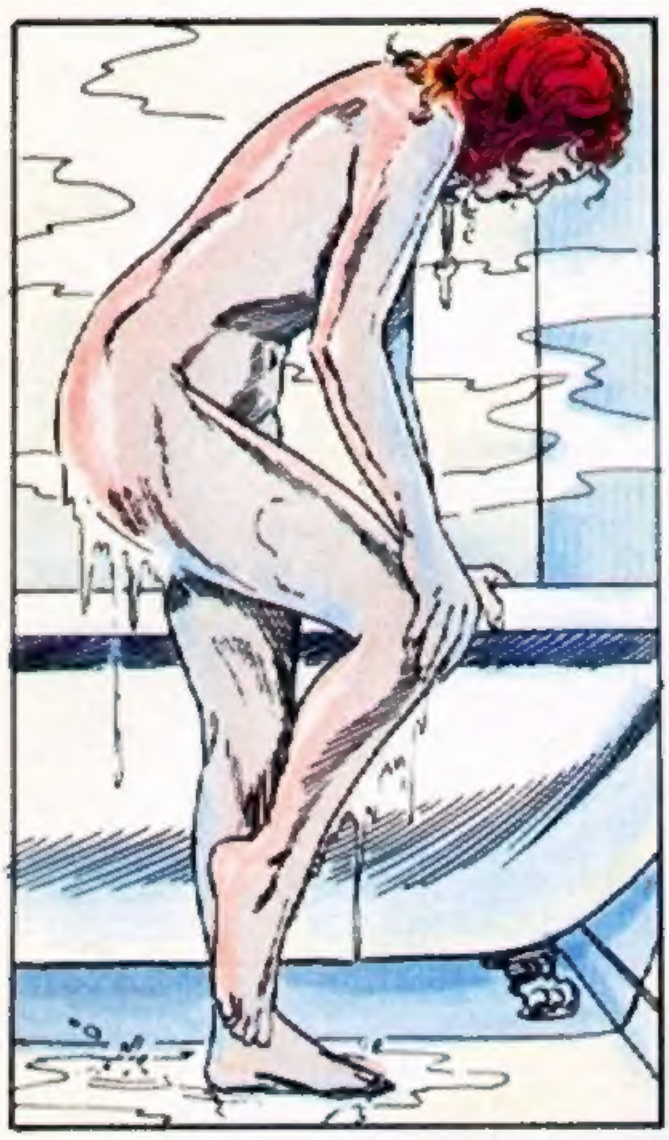
NO NEED TO BE, I'M ENJOYING THE COMPANY!

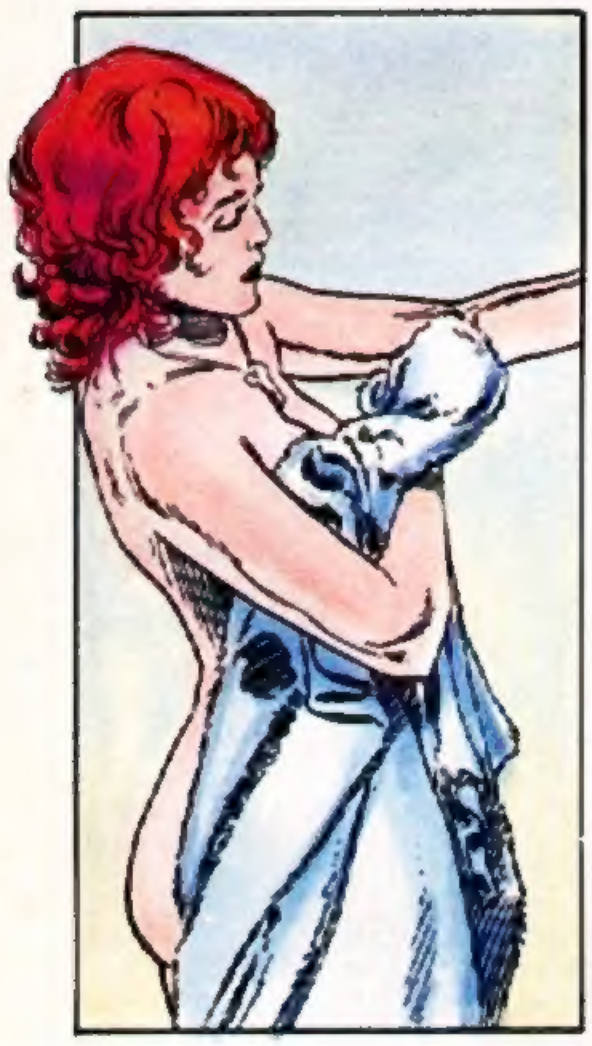
SOME COMPANY!

THERE'S A BIG OLD RUSTY-BOTTOMED TUB UPSTAIRS THAT DOESN'T LEAK, AND A TANK FULL OF HOT WATER...

OH, THAT SOUNDS *DELICIOUS!* COULD I?

HELP YOURSELF! LINEN CLOSET'S ON THE LEFT!





M-M SMELLS GOOD! CHICKEN?

YUP. SIT DOWN, IT'S ALL READY...

YOUR HAIR!

WELL, I WAS SICK OF FOOLING WITH IT. DO...DO YOU LIKE IT?

YOU LOOK...

YES--?

...PLUCKED...

THAT'S...NOT EXACTLY THE WORD I WAS HOPING FOR...

...LIKE A...A CHICKEN...

A CHICKEN. TERRIFIC.

MR. CLINTON? JOSH?...

YOU'RE...VERY PRETTY, AREN'T YOU? BUT I GUESS YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT...

IT'S... ALWAYS NICE TO HEAR...

I SHOULD THINK YOU HEAR IT ALL THE TIME. IT MUST BE NICE TO BE YOUNG AND PRETTY AND HAVE LOTS OF FRIENDS. I'LL BET YOU HAVE A HUNDRED FRIENDS, DON'T YOU? A THOUSAND! RIGHT?

...N-NOT QUITE A THOUSAND, NO...

IT'S FUNNY, ISN'T IT? WE KNOW ALL THESE PEOPLE--SOME WE'VE KNOWN FOR *YEARS*--AND YET DO WE REALLY EVER KNOW THEM AT ALL?... DO WE REALLY KNOW IF THEY *ARE* OUR FRIENDS? EVEN IF THEY REALLY *LIKE* US!

...PEOPLE COME INTO OUR LIVES AND PASS OUT AGAIN. WE SAY THE SAME HELLOS AND THE SAME GOOD-BYES, OBEY ALL THE NICETIES AND SOCIAL REDUNDANCIES THAT ARE EXPECTED OF US... AND FOR WHAT?... TO GET US THROUGH ANOTHER DAY.

KNOW WHAT I THINK SOMETIMES, MISS HOLMES? I THINK THAT DEEP DOWN INSIDE--WHERE OUR MINDS ARE SO DARK WE'RE AFRAID TO LOOK THERE--WE SECRETLY *HATE* EACH OTHER--WE SECRETLY CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF ONE ANOTHER...MUCH LESS THE *TOUCH*...

...I LIE IN BED ALONE IN THIS DARK HOUSE AND JUST STARE INTO THE BLACKNESS, THE EMPTINESS OF THE ROOM, AND I THINK: THIS MIGHT AS WELL BE MY COFFIN...THIS MIGHT AS WELL BE MY GRAVE...WHO WOULD KNOW, WHO WOULD CARE?...

...OH, THEY'D COME TO THE CEMETARY, A FEW OF THEM, THEY'D STAND AROUND AND SHAKE THEIR HEADS AND SECRETLY BE GLAD IT WASN'T THEM... THEN THEY'D MOVE ON...THEY'D JUST MOVE ON AND WAIT... UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, THE NEXT CEMETERY...

LOOK AT *YOU*... YOU'RE YOUNG AND PRETTY TODAY, BUT TOMORROW YOU'LL BE OLD AND THE DAY AFTER THAT YOU'LL BE DEAD AND WHAT WILL IT REALLY MATTER?... WHAT WILL YOUR SILLY LIFE HAVE MEANT?

WE'RE LIKE CHICKENS, MISS HOLMES, LIKE THE CHICKEN YOU'RE EATING: WE'RE BORN, WE RUN AROUND LIKE CRAZY, ACCOMPLISHING NOTHING, WE GROW FAT AND OLD AND WE'RE SWALLOWED BY OBLIVION... DROPPINGS FOR THE NEXT BROOD...

...CHICKENS...

I'VE GOT DING-DONGS AND TWINKIES FOR DESSERT!

NO, REALLY. THANK YOU... I'M FULL... IT WAS DELICIOUS.

WELL, I THINK PERHAPS I'D BETTER GO NOW, YOU'VE BEEN WONDERFULLY KIND--

I'VE DISTURBED YOU...

NO! NOT AT ALL!

NO, IT'S JUST THAT IT'S LATE, AND--

I'M A TERRIBLE HOST! PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

--AND IT'S DARK AND I'M NEAR OUT OF GAS. ON TOP OF THAT IT LOOKS LIKE RAIN! PLEASE STAY.

I'VE GOT TWO EMPTY BEDROOMS UPSTAIRS WITH *THICK* LOCKS. YOU CAN CALL YOUR FRIENDS IN THE MORNING... UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO TRY AGAIN *NOW*...

...NO, I... ACTUALLY, *UH*, I DOUBT IF ANYONE'S AT HOME RIGHT NOW...

THAT SETTLES IT, THEN! C'MON, YOU CAN HAVE EITHER THE WHITE BEDROOM WITH THE LUMPY BED OR THE LUMPY BEDROOM WITH THE WHITE BED!

HA-HA! HOW CAN I REFUSE?

BOOM

...YEAH...YEAH, SHE'S UPSTAIRS... RIGHT...

...MISSED THE BUS, SHE SAYS... YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT... NO, SHE'S SCARED TO DEATH...

...YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THAT?... OKAY... OKAY, DON'T WORRY, I WILL...

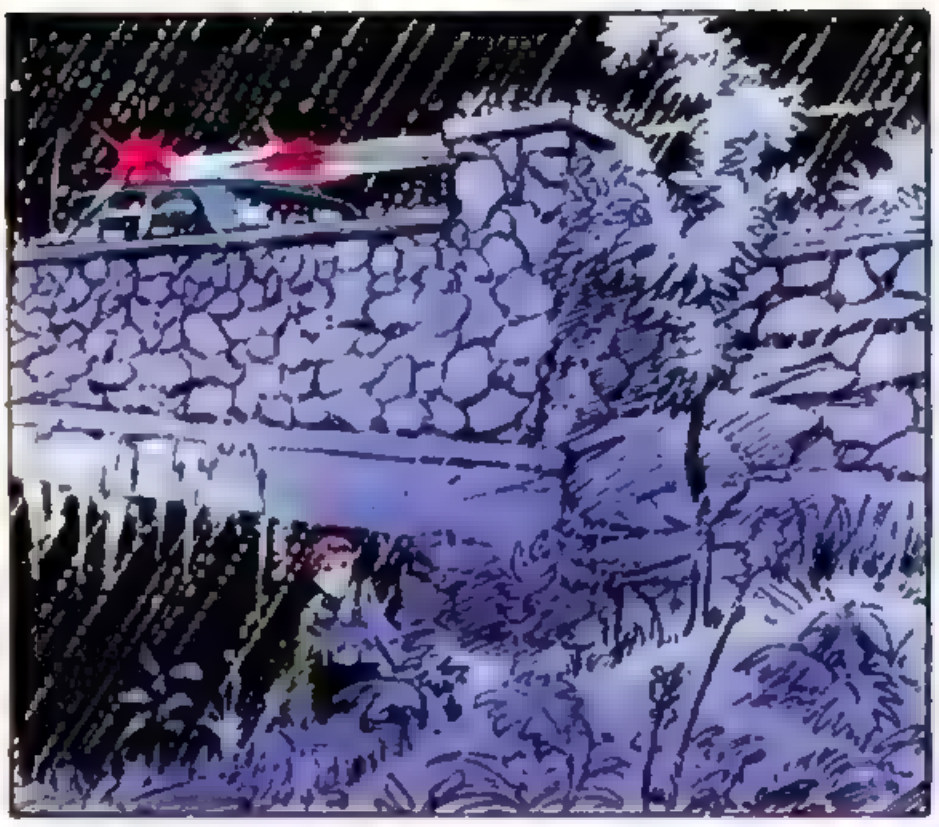
CRASH!

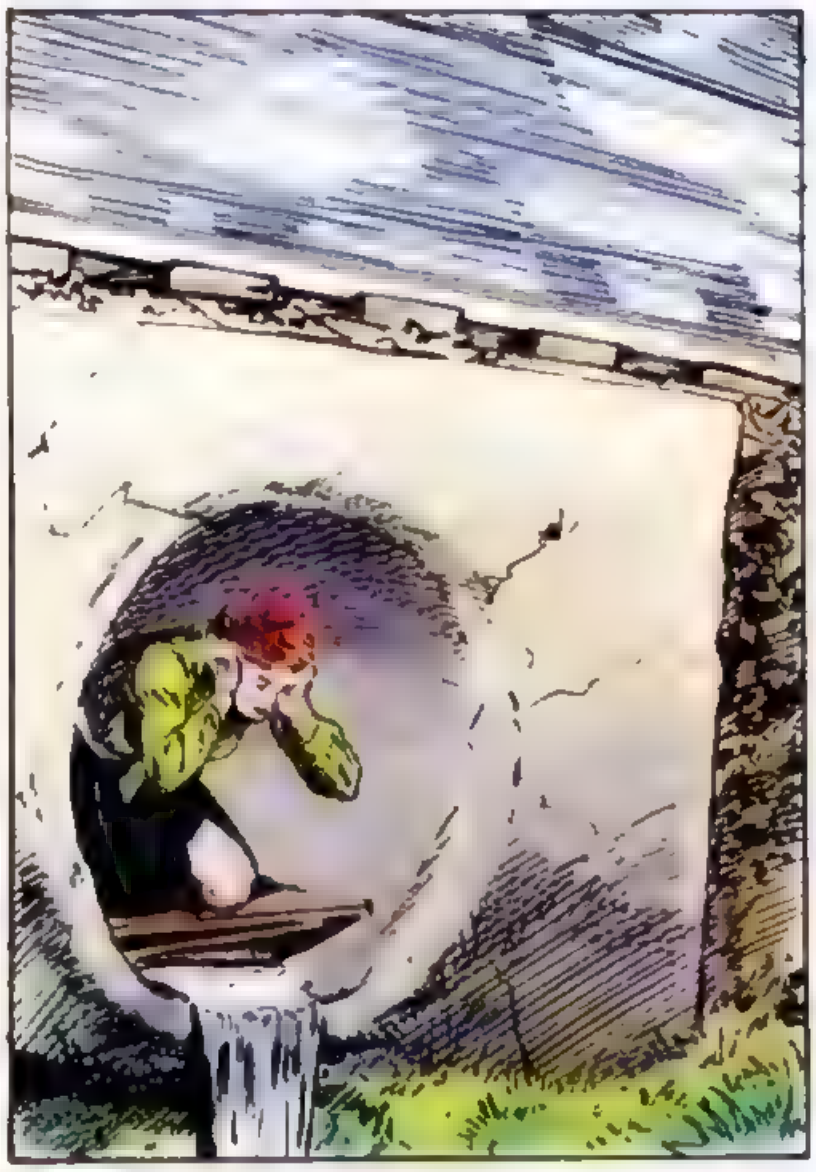
BOOM!

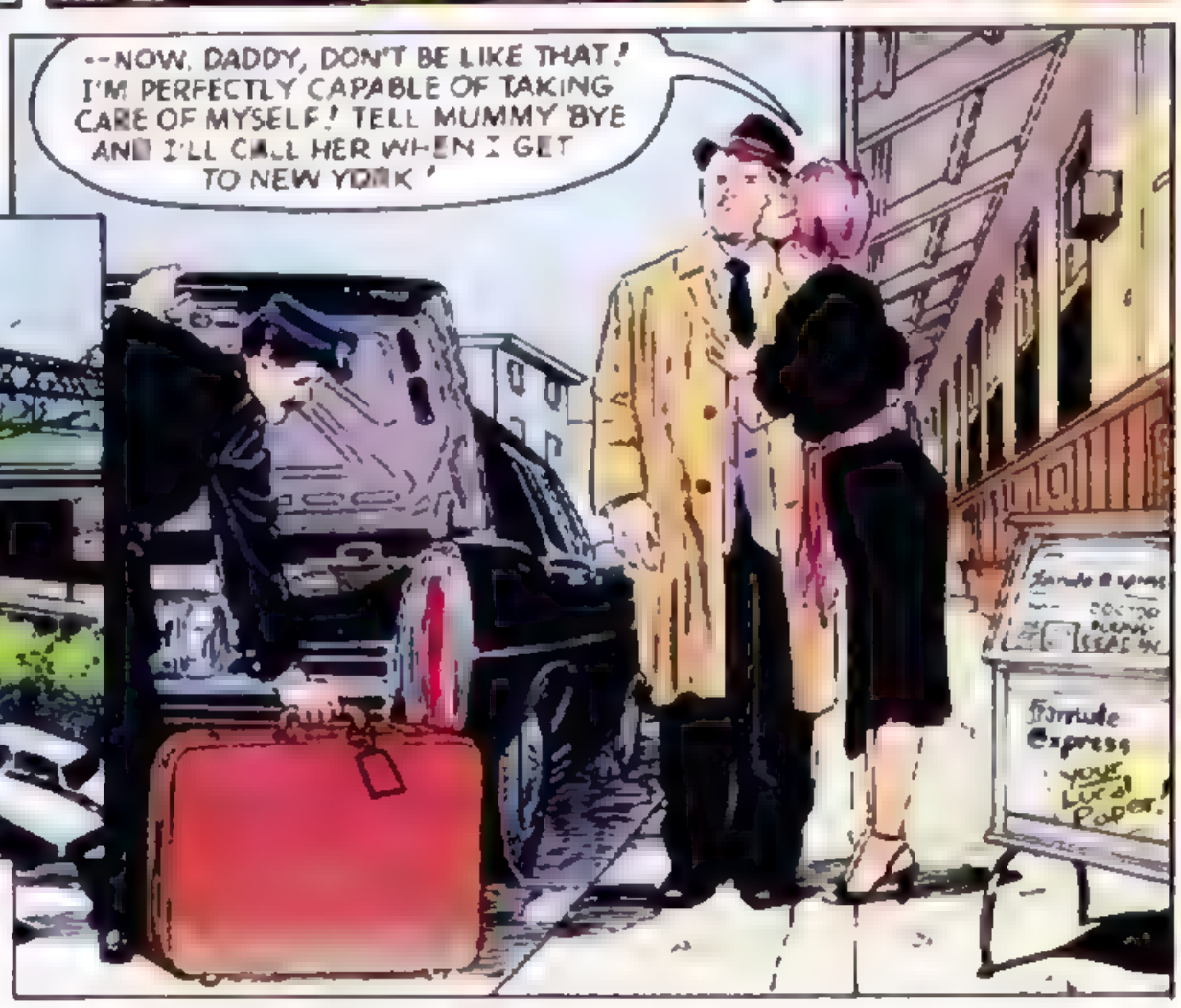
BOOM!

BLOW!

BOO!






--NOW, DADDY, DON'T BE LIKE THAT! I'M PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF MYSELF! TELL MUMMY BYE AND I'LL CALL HER WHEN I GET TO NEW YORK!
Fortitude Express
YOUR Local Porter!

PORTER!

HEY!

MY WORD!

I'M CINDY PARSONS. I HAVE A RESERVATION ON THE 10 05

. MISS PARSONS.. I'M AFRAID I DON'T--

YOU DON'T *WHAT*, NUMBSKULL? I'M CINDY PARSONS! MY FATHER IS J MICHAEL PARSONS, OWNER OF *PARSON'S GRANARY!*

OH, YES--YES, OF COURSE MISS PARSONS, A SLEEPER ON THE 10:05 TO NEW YORK THE PORTER WILL TAKE YOUR BAGS TO 4B...

THAT'S *BETTER!* HAS A MR. PHILLIPS PICKED UP HIS TICKET YET?

LET'S SEE.. *SAY*, HE HAS THE COMPARTMENT RIGHT NEXT TO YO--

AHEM-- THAT IS, AH, NO, MA'AM.

HMPH!

WOMEN

NO SMOKING

ATTENDANT?

WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU NINNY, HAND ME A TOWEL!

LINEN

SORRY, MA'AM, IT'S EMPTY I'LL HAVE TO GET YOU ONE FROM SUPPLY

WELL, BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

CREEK

WELL, DID YOU MANAGE TO FIND A TOWEL ON YOUR COFFEE BREAK?

HURRY UP, WILL YOU? THIS SOAP IS DRYING ON ME, IT'LL *RUIN* MY SKIN!

INCOMPETENT! FINDING RELIABLE HELP THESE DAYS IS··

--MMPH!

YOUR LUGGAGE IS ALREADY HERE, MISS PARSONS! HAVE A GOOD TRIP!

THANK YOU.

EXPENSIVE! WELL, SOMERSET OL' GIRL... LOOKS LIKE YOU HIT THE JACKPOT!

..EXCUSE ME...

WOULD YOU MIND VERY MUCH IF I JOINED YOU? ALL THE OTHER TABLES ARE FILLED

WELL, I..

I RECOMMEND THE NEW YORK STEAK THEY PREPARE IT IN KANSAS CITY. IT'S GREAT! TRAVELLING ALONE?

OH...?

I.. MY HUSBAND'S JOINING ME AT THE NEXT STOP..

..THAT'S NICE.

DRINKS BEFORE DINNER, FOLKS?

YES. I'LL HAVE A MAI TAI MISS--?

--HOLMES. *MRS.* HOLMES.. YES, I'LL HAVE ONE OF THOSE TOO...

TRAVEL FREQUENTLY, *MRS.* HOLMES? OH, I'M SORRY, MY NAME IS BRIAN PHILLIPS, BUT YOU CALL ME BRIAN. MAY I CALL YOU SOMETHING LESS FORMAL THAN MRS. HOLMES?

..SOMERSET.

'*SOMERSET*'... WHAT A LOVELY NAME...

NICE PURSE.

IT... IT'S MY *SISTER'S*... WE OFTEN GET THEM MIXED UP...

M-M I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN...

DO YOU OFTEN MIX UP *YOUR* PURSES, MR. PHILLIPS?

BRIAN, NO, NOT PURSES. IT'S *FIANCEES* I KEEP MISPLACING.

INDEED?

YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET MINE AT THE LAST STATION. SHE DIDN'T SHOW UP.

THAT'S TOO BAD...

YES. YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH YOU LOOK LIKE HER, THOUGH... RIGHT DOWN TO THE HAT AND SUNGLASSES...

REALLY..

M-M, I'LL BET YOU EVEN HAVE THE SAME TASTE IN COMPACTS MY FIANCEE'S WAS CRUSHED PEARL--WHAT'S YOURS MADE OF?

TORTOISE SHELL.

HERE YOU ARE, MA'AM--SIR...

WELL, GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. PHILLIPS. HAVE A NICE TRIP.

WHAT, NO LUNCH?

I'M AFRAID I DON'T CARE MUCH FOR KANSAS CITY. GOOD-BYE.

AS IF I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS, NOW I HAVE TO DODGE *THIS* JOKER ALL THE WAY TO NEW YORK!

DO NOT DISTURB

WELL, I'VE STILL GOT THE CLOTHES I WAS WEARING BEFORE... MAYBE I SHOULD JUST TRY TO SNEAK OFF AT THE NEXT STOP AND--

WAIT A MINUTE! THE *LABEL!* I DIDN'T LOOK AT THE *LABEL!*

OBIKO BOUTIQUE--DOESN'T RING ANY BELLS... BUT AT THIS POINT IT'S THE ONLY CLUE I'VE GOT TO MY PAST..

Obiko Boutique

NEW YORK

THAT. AND MAYBE THIS KEY..

OBIKO... NEW YORK... IF I CAN JUST LAY LOW TILL I GET THERE, MAYBE SOMEONE AT THIS BOUTIQUE KNOWS MY NAME... MY FACE... ME...

WELL, YOU MAY BE ALONE, KIDDO, BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL BE WELL-DRESSED!

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Obiko Boutique NEW YORK

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WELL, YOU MAY BE ALONE, KIDDO, BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL BE WELL-DRESSED!

GO AHEAD, PUT IT ON--

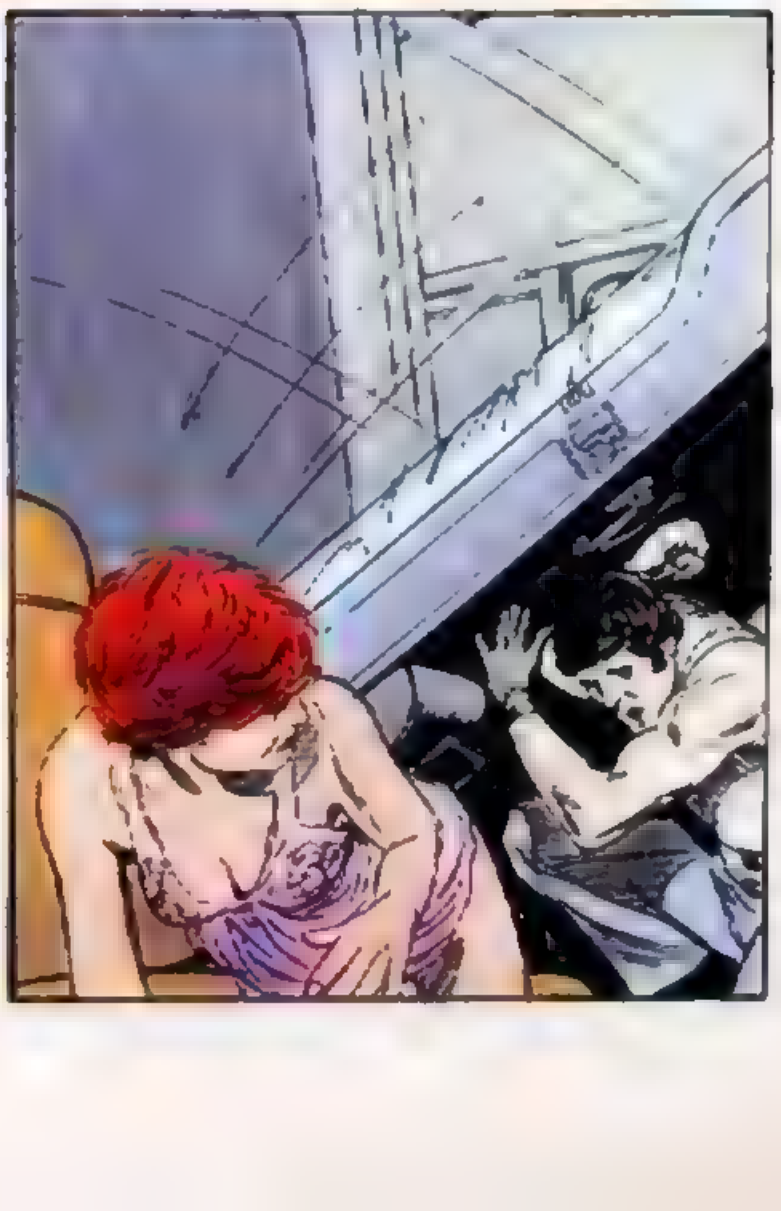
--I'M SURE IT LOOKS BETTER ON YOU...

NICE

THANK YOU.

IT DOES LOOK BETTER ON YOU

HOW CAN YOU TELL, WAY OVER THERE...?



FIGHTING ALWAYS (GASP) MAKES ME HUNGRY (GASP), HOW ABOUT WE COLLECT THAT NEW YORK STEAK NOW?

WHY DON'T YOU (GASP) GO BACK TO FAIRVALE (GASP) AND COLLECT YOUR FIANCEE--I DIDN'T HURT HER THAT MUCH!

I KNOW (PANT) I SAW HER--SO DID THE POLICE!

THE POLICE...

--M-M, THEY GOT A GOOD VIEW OF HER IN HER NEW PINK PANTIES. WHAT THEY DIDN'T GET A VIEW OF WAS HER CLOTHING BOARDING THE SANTA FE TO NEW YORK.

BUT YOU DID...

WHY... WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL THEM?

I'M NOT SURE... MAYBE IT WAS THE SIGHT OF MY FIANCEE IN HER PANTIES--OR MAYBE I NEVER WANTED TO GET MARRIED AFTER ALL...

ARE YOU GOING TO TURN ME IN?

WELL, NOT UNTIL AFTER DINNER, ANYWAY. FEEL LIKE THAT STEAK YET?

HOW DO YOU KNOW I WON'T STICK YOU WITH THOSE WHEN YOUR BACK IS TURNED?

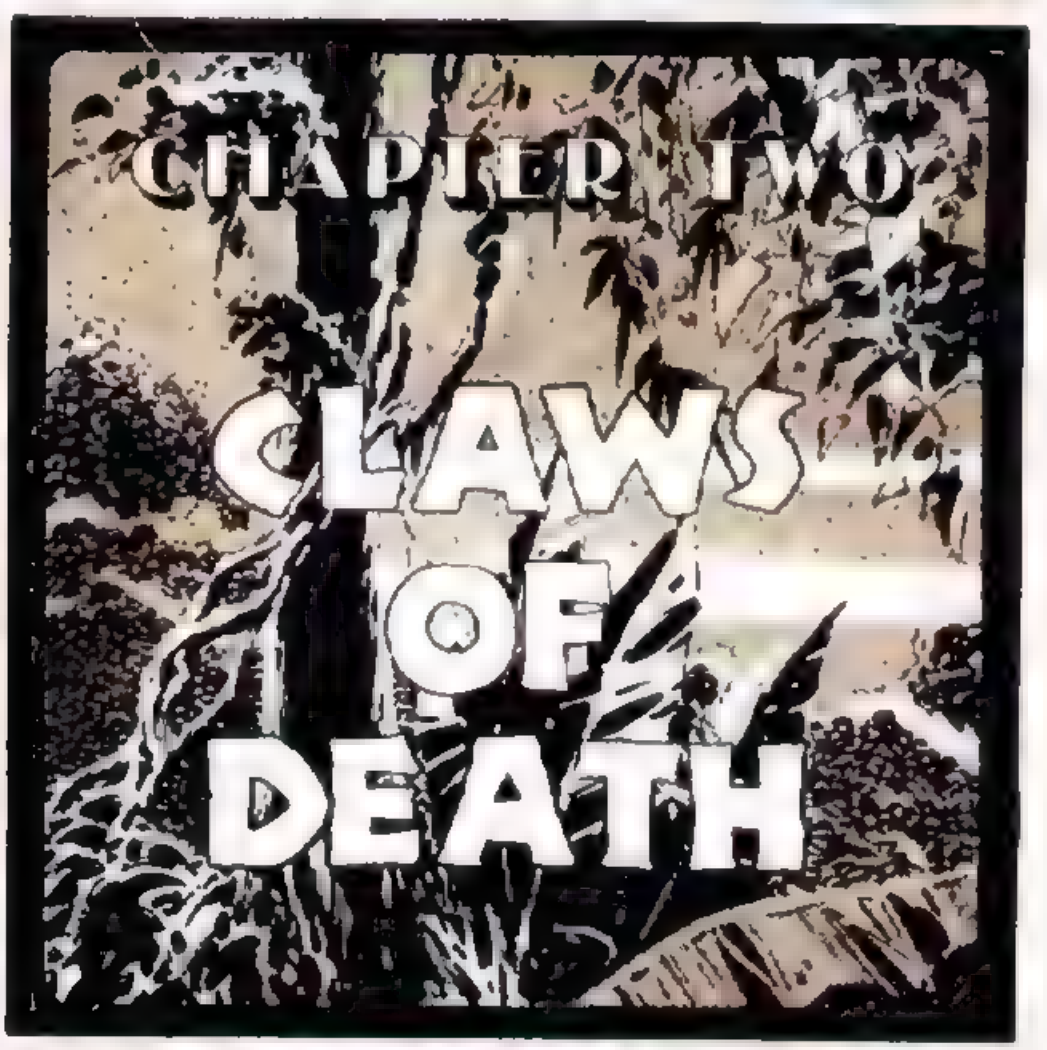
I DON'T-- BUT I THINK YOU'RE TIRED OF RUNNING FROM WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE SO OBVIOUSLY RUNNING FROM--

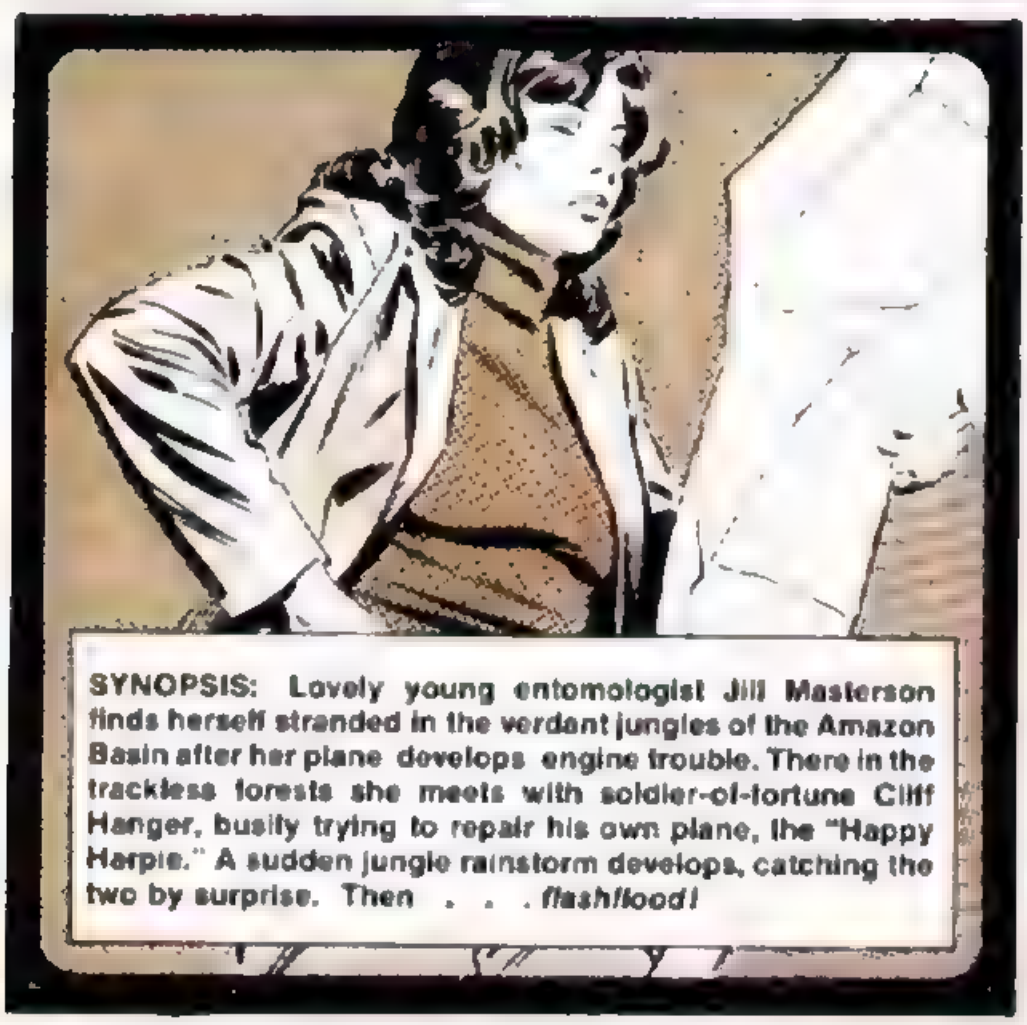
--AND RIGHT NOW, SWEETIE, I'M ABOUT THE ONLY FRIEND YOU'VE GOT! NOW WHAT'S YOUR *REAL* NAME?

YOU'RE THE ONE WITH ALL THE ANSWERS-- YOU TELL ME!

YOU STILL GOING TO PLAY HARD TO GET?

UNTIL I FIND OUT WHO'S DOING THE GETTING, YOU BET YOUR BIG BROWN EYES I AM!




SYNOPSIS: Lovely young entomologist Jill Masterson finds herself stranded in the verdant jungles of the Amazon Basin after her plane develops engine trouble. There in the trackless forests she meets with soldier-of-fortune Cliff Hanger, busily trying to repair his own plane, the "Happy Harpie." A sudden jungle rainstorm develops, catching the two by surprise. Then . . . flashflood!

COLORIST: JOE CHIODO LETTERER: ED KING EDITOR: APRIL CAMPBELL

OH, NO!

CLIFF!

GRAB HOLD OF THE COCKPIT-- WE'RE GOING OVER!

YOU OKAY?

IS THAT A RHETORICAL QUESTION?

HANG ON--WE'RE NOT OUT OF THIS YET!

Soon...

LOOKS LIKE THE MAIN FLOOD IS SPENT...STORM'S CLEARING...

GOING TO TAKE A LOT OF WORK TO GET THE ***HAPPY HARPY*** AIRBORNE AGAIN! MAYBE WE--JILL?

HEY! TAKE IT EASY! THE WORST IS OVER!

(SOB-SOB)... NO, IT'S (SOB) JUST BEGINNING! I'LL (SOB) ***NEVER*** FIND HIM NOW!

FIND WHO?

MY FATHER, CHARLES MASTERSON! HE'S BEEN MISSING IN THIS AREA FOR THREE MONTHS! WHAT DID YOU THINK I WAS DOING OUT HERE, LOOKING FOR MY CAR KEYS?

BUT HAVEN'T THE AUTHORITIES--

OH, *SURE!* FOR ABOUT *TWO WEEKS!* BELIEVE ME, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS BETTER THINGS TO DO THAN TO LOOK FOR AN ECCENTRIC OLD ENTOMOLOGIST FROM THE STATES! I EVEN CONTACTED ROOSEVELT, BUT HE'S TOO BUSY WITH THE DEPRESSION!

MY FATHER IS AN EXPERIENCED NATURALIST, MR HANGER, HE'S LIVED IN THE JUNGLE ALL HIS LIFE. HE WASN'T PRONE TO "ACCIDENTS".

YOU'RE INTIMATING FOUL PLAY?

I JUST WANT TO FIND HIM, THAT'S ALL. SO FAR, I'VE HIRED THREE SUPPOSEDLY "EXPERT TRACKERS", ALL TO NO AVAIL. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE JOB?

ORDINARILY, YES... BUT I'M A LITTLE LOST MYSELF AT THE MOMENT.

WHAT IS IT?

JUST MY LUCK! I FINALLY STRIKE IT RICH, AND I CAN'T FIND MY WAY BACK TO SPEND IT!

A *DIAMOND?* LET ME *SEE!*

HEY, *WATCH* IT!

CLIFF! HELP, I-I'M *SINKING!*

QUICKSAND!

IT'S JUST LOOSE MUD FROM THE STORM-- DON'T *STRUGGLE!*

I SAID, DON'T STRUGGLE! YOU'RE PULLING ME IN WITH YOU!

GRAB HOLD OF MY WAIST!

I WAS AFRAID THAT TRICK WOULDN'T WORK TWICE!

OH, GOD, WE'RE GOING TO DIE!

NOT WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE, WE'RE NOT!

CLIFF! (GLUG!)

...JILL?... CAN YOU HEAR ME?..

JILL? ARE YOU IN THERE?.

HELLO! WELCOME BACK TO THE *REAL* WORLD!

(COUGH-COUGH!) WHAT (COUGH!) *H-HAPPENED* (CHOKE!)..

YOU SWALLOWED A COUPLE OF POUNDS OF *MUD* IS WHAT... ON YOUR WAY *IN!*

INTO (CHOKE) *WHAT?*

A *CAVERN!*

WITH A *THIN* ROOF! WE DROPPED RIGHT THROUGH! AND THAT'S ONLY PART OF THE GOOD NEWS--

--HERE'S THE *REST!*

(GASP!) *DIAMONDS!*

THERE MUST BE A FORTUNE IN THIS PILE ALONE!

M-M... NOW FOR THE *BAD* NEWS...

...I THINK IT BELONGS TO SOMEBODY *ELSE!*

A *MINE!* WE'RE IN A *MINE!*

A *DIAMOND MINE,* OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?

WELL, THAT'S THE BEST PLACE TO HAVE ONE IF YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE ONE! YOU FEEL WELL ENOUGH FOR A LITTLE EXPLORING?

ELECTRIC LIGHTS... STORM MUST HAVE KNOCKED THEM OUT...

...AND LOOK, OIL CANS! GREAT! JILL, TAKE OFF YOUR JACKET!

I'VE BEEN ASKED WITH MORE FINESSE... WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?

HEY, THAT COST ME TWENTY BUCKS AT GIMBLES!

YOU'RE GOING TO BE RICH, REMEMBER?

END OF THE LINE...

A DOOR! HOW PECULIAR! IS IT LOCKED?

IT ISN'T (UH!) NOW!

GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. HANGER! SO NICE OF YOU TO JOIN US! WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU! COME IN, COME IN!

CLIFF!

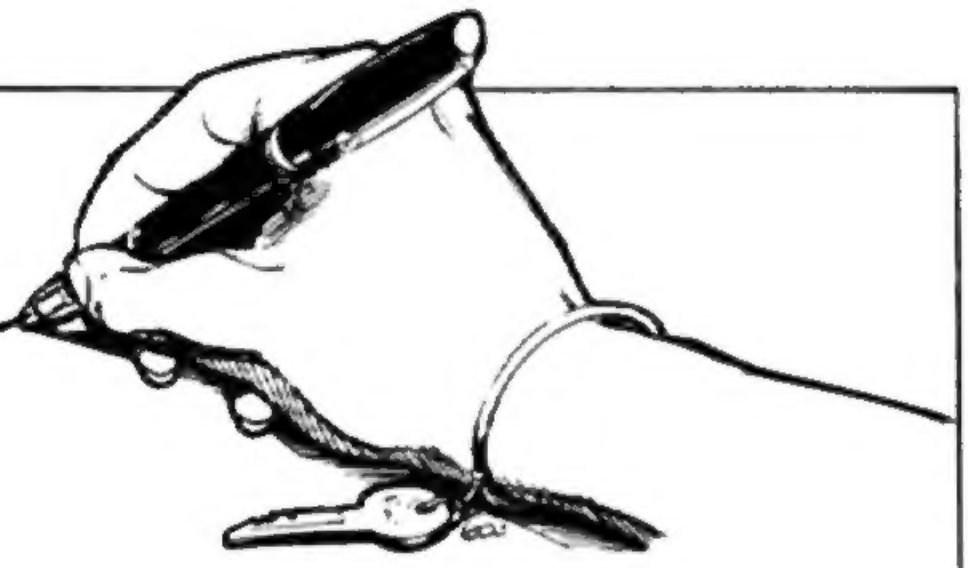
I'M AFRAID, HOWEVER, THE YOUNG LADY WON'T BE ABLE TO JOIN US-- FOR THE MOMENT, THAT IS! (HEH-HEH!)

WE'VE HAD OUR EYE ON YOU FOR SOME TIME, MR. HANGER -- YOU'RE A REMARKABLE MAN! BUT LIKE ALL MEN, YOU HAVE A FATAL FLAW...

--"CURIOSITY," MR. HANGER! IT KILLED THE CAT! (HEH-HEH!)...IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, IT MAY NOT BE ENOUGH! (HEH-HEH-HEH!)

DON'T MISS CHAPTER THREE: VOICE OF DOOM!

Sincerely, Somerset



Dear April:

In this day and age most people would balk at paying $1.50 for a comic book. I really can't say that I blame them, but when the quality of the book is like that of *Somerset Holmes #1* then you'll find this ol'boy eager to pay his sometimes hard earned cash for a high quality book.

I would have to say that *Somerset Holmes* is more of a comic book movie than a comic book. This is evident by the way that Brent lays out his art and panels. Although there wasn't that much dialogue in this issue I am fully aware of the talents of Bruce Jones. Because of him *Ka-Zar the Savage* has been one of my all-time favorite titles. I'm sure that *Somerset Holmes* will also find its place among my top favorite comics.

I would also like to say that the quality of the inside cover pictures was top notch. Unlike those photos that appear in *Ka-Zar* yours are of high quality and not a bit "Grainy."

I'm looking forward to issue #2.

Beau Smith
110 Lewis Ave., Apt. #7
Barboursville, W.V. 25504

Dear April,

Pacific has done it again! Another "better idea" jumps off the pages of *Somerset Holmes*. What a mystery! Bruce Jones' script opened up a whole list of unanswered questions while Brent Anderson's art work brought the story to vivid life. I could practically smell the antiseptic odor of the doctor's office, and the sleaze of the dingy bar and grill rest room was enough to make anyone squeamish. This is great stuff! I'm a fairly new Anderson fan and I think this guy just keeps getting better and better.

I also enjoyed the "Cliff Hanger" back up. Its excitement and humor was a fine complement to your lead feature. Congratulations of another winner!

Gerry Woodling
228 Auburn Avenue
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Dear Miss Campbell,

Or should I call your Somerset? Due to such enthusiastic professionals as yourself and your creative team the comic industry is, at last, beginning to publish alternatives to superhero blandness which aren't superhero exploits transposed to barbrous sword and sorcery or totalitarian near future settings. These alternatives are still taking their time in coming, and I'm not ecstatic about all of them when they do come but with the addition of *Somerset Holmes* to your two fine anthology titles Pacific continues to lead the field.

As you commented in your editorial the strip borrows heavily from the cinema but since film imagery has, in Wim Wenders words, colonised our subconscious that isn't too surprising. The idea of using an opening credits sequence was a new one on me, though.

Those Marvel-lously unusual *Ka-Zar* tales proved what a fine pairing Bruce Jones and Brent Anderson were and, of course, Al Williamson is one of those artists whose work is continually of such a high standard and has been for so long that comment on details in his work is redundant. Suffice to say, that the creators on both strips are in fine fettle. Unlike many mystery readers I never try to outguess the author, preferring to let the writer take me where he wants to take me so as to appreciate the style and the skills of the author more fully, getting my enjoyment from the contents of the story rather than from how well my theories matched up with the denoument. All of which simply means I have no ideas about the key, the memory loss or the physical attacks and there are no this-is-what-I-think-will-happen comments in this letter. Judging by your first issue I know I'm in for a very enjoyable read every 2 months, though.

Which brings me to the gripe. Bi-monthly. Although it's a shame the anthology titles only come out 6 times a year not 12. The very nature of *Somerset Holmes*, the book demands monthly status. The serials "Cliff Hanger" are derived from were shown at the local cinemas once a week week whilst the suspense thrillers the lead feature follows in the footsteps of were showcased in hour to an hour-and-a-half storytimes. Two months is simply too long a time to be kept on the edge of a seat in anticipation without having to re-pick-up the disparate and oblique plot-threads and lose some of the expectancy and suspense in the process. Of course, there are probably deadline problems I'm unaware of but I hope an increase in frequency could, at least, be considered.

The photos on the inside front covers added a personal touch and Bruce Jones looks like a normal healthy human being despite conjuring up all those twisted tales. Even worse, being a comics writer my opinion of most writers who've joined the field since 1965 or thereabouts always tends to plummet after I've seen what they look like in fan-magazine-published photos.

Finally, I hope you didn't pose for every shot in the story and that Brent Anderson relied purely on his imagination for the hit-and-run on page 2.

Thanks for listening.

Dave Hanks
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Somerset discovers part of her past — a part she may not wish to know . . .

"Past Tense"

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